



WHEN YOUR BABY IS SICK

As babies get older, their bodies are better able to fight off sickness. A low fever in a newborn may be more serious than a higher fever in a 7-month old. At any age, always call your baby's doctor for advice if he seems very sleepy, doesn't want to play or eat or can't be comforted.

Colds

- Stuffy noses make it hard for babies to breathe and eat. To help your baby breathe, try putting a few saline drops in her nose. Wait minute and then suction out mucus. If this doesn't work, call your baby's health care provider. To help your child breathe easier while she is sleeping, put a pillow under her mattress to elevate her head and use a cool-mist humidifier. (Be sure to clean the humidifier frequently to avoid mold growth.)

Gas

- Crying and pulling up legs are signs of gas.
- Burp your baby more often when feeding.
- Try softly rubbing your baby's tummy or slowly bringing her knees to her chest.
- Ask your baby's doctor if simethicone drops or switching formulas might help.

Vomiting

- Many babies spit up a bit after eating and when burping. Vomiting, however, is much more forceful. Call your baby's doctor if the vomiting lasts more than 24 hours, if the baby has diarrhea, a swollen belly, seems in pain or is very tired or irritable. Check with your baby's health care provider about giving an electrolyte solution to put back lost fluids, salt and sugars.

Fever

- Fever means the body is fighting illness or infection.
- If a feverish baby cries a lot, it may be a sign of ear infection or other serious illness. Call your baby's doctor.
- For an infant under 3 months, call your baby's doctor right away if the baby's temperature is 100.2 F or more; 101 F or more in children between 3 and 6 months; and 103 F or more if older than 6 months. Also call if a fever lasts more than 24 hours. Check with your baby's doctor about using a non-aspirin pain reliever to lower fever.

Rashes

- Dry, scaly skin may be eczema, which should be treated by your baby's health care provider.
- Tiny red bumps may be prickly heat. Loose, cool, cotton clothes and bedding may help.
- For diaper rash, change diapers more often and clean area carefully with warm water. Air-dry your baby's bottom for a while each day. Use a diaper rash ointment or cream to keep wetness away from skin and help clear up rash.





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Cradle Cap

- Soften scaly flakes on the scalp with a bit of baby oil and a soft brush.
- This kind of flaking is very common in newborns.¹

Resources

In addition to choosing a health care provider for your baby, it's also important to know where to look for quality support and education. These organizations can help:

American Academy of Pediatrics - (847) 434-4000 Children's health and Parenting publications

La Leche League - (800) LALECHE Breastfeeding consultations and publications

March of Dimes - 1-888-MODIMES or www.marchofdimes.com

¹ The Tennessee Department of Health would like to thank the March of Dimes for permission to use the copy from their brochure, *NEWBORN CARE*, for this fact sheet.